

Message Text

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TAGS: BEXP, JA
SUBJECT: TRADE FACILITATION COMMITTEE; SENIOR REVIEW
COMMITTEE

THERE IS QUOTED BELOW AN ARTICLE FROM THE NIHON KEIZAI
DATED AUGUST 9, 1978 CONCERNING THE VISIT TO TOKYO
OF ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF COMMERCE FRANK WEIL
FOR THE SUBCABINET LEVEL CONFERENCE OF THE JAPAN-
UNITED STATES TRADE FACILITATION COMMITTEE. (BEGIN TEXT):

"SENSE OF SECTIONALISM AMONG GOVERNMENT OFFICES IS
DELAYING OPENING OF THE MARKET; SHARPLY PURSUED BY
US ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF COMMERCE,"

"(PARA) US ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF COMMERCE WEIL, WHO
IS NOW VISITING JAPAN, CALLED ON EXTERNAL ECONOMIC
AFFAIRS MINISTER USHIBA AT THE FOREIGN MINISTRY TOWARD
THE EVENING OF THE 8TH, AND CONFERRED WITH HIM FOR
ABOUT 20 MINUTES. ON THIS OCCASION, THE ASSISTANT
SECRETARY EXPRESSED THE DISSATISFACTION THAT "AMONG
JAPANESE GOVERNMENT OFFICES, THERE ARE SOME
WHICH CAN ONLY SEE DOMESTIC PROBLEMS."

(PARA) ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF COMMERCE WEIL CAME TO
JAPAN TO ATTEND THE SUB-CABINET-LEVEL CONFERENCE OF
THE JAPAN-US TRADE FACILITATION COMMITTEE, WHICH WAS
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HELD ON THE 7TH. HOWEVER, ON THE 8TH, HE PAID "SEPARATE
CALLS" ON THE TRANSPORTATION MINISTRY, THE WELFARE
MINISTRY AND THE TELEGRAPH AND TELEPHONE PUBLIC CORPORA-
TION, AND HELD TALKS ON IMPROVING THE IMPORT INSPECTION
SYSTEM FOR AUTOMOBILES AND MEDICAL DRUGS, AND THE
OPENING OF THE DOOR TO US PRODUCTS FOR PROCUREMENT BY
THE TELEGRAPH AND TELEPHONE CORPORATION. THE JAPAN-US

TRADE FACILITATION COMMITTEE WAS ORIGINALLY DESIGNED AS THE PLACE FOR TAKING UP AND SETTLING "COMPLAINTS" CONNECTED WITH TRADE, IN A PACKAGE. THEREFORE, IF ALL PROBLEMS HAD BEEN DISCUSSED AT THIS COMMITTEE, THEN IT WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN NECESSARY FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF COMMERCE WEIL TO PAY SEPARATE CALLS ON THEM.

ACTUALLY, HOWEVER, IT IS BEING POINTED OUT THAT "THE OPERATION OF THE TRADE FACILITATION COMMITTEE IS NOT NECESSARILY GOING SMOOTHLY" (FOREIGN MINISTRY SOURCE). THIS IS BECAUSE, THOUGH THIS COMMITTEE IS UNDER MITI'S JURISDICTION, THE FEELING IS STRONG AMONG OTHER MINISTRIES THAT "THE SAID COMMITTEE IS UNDER MITI MANAGEMENT, BUT IF THERE ARE PROBLEMS, MITI OUGHT TO BRING THEM TO US DIRECTLY, INSTEAD OF GOING THROUGH THAT COMMITTEE." AS A MATTER OF FACT, THE WELFARE MINISTRY, WHICH WAS ONE OF THE OFFICES VISITED SEPARATELY BY ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF COMMERCE WEIL, HAD NOT SENT ANY REPRESENTATIVE TO ATTEND THE SUB-CABINET-LEVEL CONFERENCE HELD ON THE 7TH.

THE GROUNDS FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY WEIL'S DISSATISFACTION IS THAT THIS KIND OF VERTICAL ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE IS DELAYING THE OPENING OF THE JAPANESE MARKET. AT THE PRESENT TIME, TENSION IS MOUNTING IN JAPAN-US RELATIONS, AS SEEN IN THE EXAMPLE OF THE US CONGRESS SENDING A LETTER TO THE PRESIDENT, SEEKING THE STUDYING OF THE

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IMPOSITION OF A SURCHARGE ON IMPORTS FROM JAPAN. ALL THE MORE FOR THIS REASON, IT IS NECESSARY FOR THE VARIOUS MINISTRIES TO KEEP THEIR SENSE OF SECTIONALISM WITHIN REASONABLE BOUNDS."

COMMENT: EMBASSY BELIEVES THIS KIND OF PUBLIC AIRING OF THE PROBLEMS CAUSED FOR TRADE BY THE DOMESTICALLY-ORIENTED JAPANESE MINISTRIES IS HELPFUL. IT HELPS BUILD A CONSENSUS FOR MORE CAREFUL CONSIDERATION OF THE IMPACT OF SUCH MINISTRIES' ADMINISTRATIVE ACTIONS. END COMMENT.

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